

Chapter 45

MINING OF PRECIOUS METALS

BRIGHAM YOUNG'S IDEAS RELATIVE TO MINING

The mining industry in Utah, especially that of precious metals, has been developed almost entirely by non-Mormons. The main reason for this is that Brigham Young and the other pioneer leaders were definitely opposed to having the Mormon people engage in searching after gold and silver. They believed that agriculture was the basis for the type of society they wished to develop under the influence of their religious teachings.

When gold was discovered in California, the cry was raised by many of the settlers of Utah: "To California—to the Gold of Ophir our brethren have discovered! To California!"

But Governor Young flatly refused to grant his people permission to go to the gold fields. He told them, "I hope the gold mines will be no nearer than 800 miles. Some few have caught the gold fever. I counseled such, and all the Saints to remain in these valleys of the mountains and make improvements, build comfortable houses and raise grain.

"If we were to go to San Francisco and dig up chunks of gold, or find it here in the valley, it would ruin us. Many want to unite Babylon and Zion, but it is the love of money that hurts them. If we find gold and silver, we are in bondage directly.

"I can stand in my door and can see where there is untold millions of rich treasures of the earth—gold and silver. But the time has not come for the Saints to dig gold. It is our duty first to develop the agricultural resources of this country As for gold and silver and other rich minerals of the earth, there is no other country that equals this; but let them alone; let others seek them, and we will cultivate the soil; for if the mines are opened first, we are a thousand miles away from the base of supplies, and the people would rush in here in such great

